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AUTHOR Jobe, Ronald A.
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ABSTRACT

Despite the international concern for having books available to children and the fact that thousands of books for children are being published in numerous languages, relatively few of these books are being translated into English. One of the reasons that publishers are reluctant to produce books in translation is the complex nature of the translation process and the difficulty of finding a highly qualified person to translate the book successfully. The uppermost task for the translator is to try to create the work as if the author were actually writing in the translator's own language. Children's books in translation often do not sell well because award winning titles are not highly publicized, and because of the impression that translated books are "heavy-reading" and more thought provoking than action oriented. Fortunately, the last ten years have witnessed an upsurge in the number of attractive and appealing translations for children. Reading books about young people in other countries gives children a reflection of life in other areas, and acquaints them with different customs and points of view. (A bibliography of children's books in translation is appended.) (HTH)

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THE FOURTH WORLD: LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN IN TRANSLATION

Dr. Ronald A. Jobe

Department of Language Education

Faculty of Education

University of British Columbia

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THE FOURTH WORLD: LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN IN TRANSLATION

Initially all knowledge was handed down orally from one generation to the next, as well as from one peoples to another. If the beginning was the word, then words became recorded language and were immediately translated so that others could share, understand, and comprehend. This was in itself a form of translation since nobody shared information and related accounts in precisely the same way. As these tellings were repeated, interpretation and differences occurred which became unique to a literature or culture. Since the time of the Tower of Babel, mankind has found it important to translate the literature of other peoples so that these too could be shared. Through literature our lives take on a deeper meaning. We come to realize the full potential of our emotions, feelings, and senses.

Books establish bridges of global awareness and foster better understanding and appreciation of other cultures. Importantly, books evoke within us the realization that all are one people with similar needs, desires, and feelings. All have the need to love and be loved, the desire for a sense of security and feelings for mystery and adventure. This commonality of needs is reflected rather powerfully by the many cultures which possess similar versions of such folktales and legends as the occurrence of the flood, Cinderella, and the step-mother.

People who have strong cultural concerns realize the importance of providing children with a literary heritage because this not only provides immediate enjoyment but transmits the values and myths inherent in any culture. For example, Greek and Roman myths, Grimm folk tales, and Perrault fairy tales are not considered integral parts of any English-speaking culture.

Children and Culture

Children's literature has often been referred to as a reflection of the society in which it is produced. The concern for having books available to children has never been greater than in the past two decades. In fact, during the 1970's the English-speaking world has truly been experiencing a golden age of literature for children. There are now over 45,000 titles in print available. Each year, over 2200 new titles are published in the United States, 2800 in Great Britain, and nearly 200 in Canada. In fact most countries are actively producing books for children. It is only a matter of economics and the degrees of sophistication which vary. Some countries, particularly the communist states, believe firmly in the value of literature for their children, and readily make it available to all by producing affordable editions.

Europe has traditionally been one of the most active regions in publishing for children. Table A illustrates this extensive book production as documented by UNESCO in 1980. Co-publishing amongst

countries is an economic matter of fact in Europe, and consequently allows for a greater number of high quality books, particularly picture books to be produced.

TABLE A : PRODUCTION OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS (UNESCO 1977)

	Books	Pamphlets	Total
United Kingdom	2330	483	2813
U.S.S.R.	1833	1416	3249
Czechoslovakia	675	151	826
Poland	200	98	298
German Democratic Republic	395	286	681
Federal Republic of Germany	1909	964	2873
Netherlands	1712		1712
Denmark	934		934
Italy	424	205	629
Sweden	650		650
Switzerland	435		435

Despite desperate financial restraints, third world countries also realize the importance of producing their own children's books rather than relying on imported ideas and themes. Initially this has been taking

the form of school texts and readers in the dominant language of the country, but gradually has evolved into folk tales, legends and themes pertinent to the respective area. It is essential for these countries to produce indigenous children's literature in order to perpetuate their own culture. Translated editions allow their children to learn about other peoples, values, and cultures. However, the children are rarely involved in concerns centered in their own locality. Rarely,too, are they allowed to reflect on developmental moments in their own lives. This is particularly relevant in the African, Asian and Latin American countries. Table B highlights the more prolific publishing records in these areas.

TABLE B: PRODUCTION OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS (UNESCO 1977)

	Books	Pamphlets	Total
AFRICA			
Egypt (1976)	28	28	56
Nigeria (1975)	72	3	75
Tanzania	15	1	16
Latin America			
Mexico	15	20	35
Brazil	2275	146	2421
Colombia	16		16
Argentina	641		641
Chile	3	3	6

Asia

	Books	Pamphlets	Total
Japan	2062	469	2531
Hong Kong	70	85	155
India	396		396
Singapore	120	188	308
Malaysia	129	204	333

African countries, traditionally importers of Western (French and English) books and texts for children, are now evidencing more success in the production of children's books in the various regional languages. Advancements are made each year both in the quantity and quality of the materials produced.

Although Japan's children's publishing industry is well known for its exceptionally high quality and sheer volume of printing, its influence upon the rest of Asia is great. Translations of Japanese children's book are found throughout the Asian countries. Many of these appear in the language of the receiving country because of the advancements made in the printing process by photographically separating print spaces from the illustrations of the book. The books can then be produced in huge quantities when the expensive colour separations are printed, and later run again for the black print runs.

Argentina is the leading influence in Spanish books for children in Latin America. However, Brazil is clearly the leader in the production of books for children but because these are written in Portugese, their influence has not been recognized to any great extent. Mexico might have been expected to provide the dominant leadership in the Spanish-speaking region, however internal publishing priorities and economics have established a preference for the direct importation of children's books from Spain. The recent interest in the United States in pluralistic approaches to biculturalism has caused a tremendous surge in the importation of Spanish children's books from both Spain and Mexico.

Despite the fact that thousands of books for children are being published in numerous languages other than English, the surprising statistic is that relatively few of these books are being translated into English. Indeed, other than such favourties as Pippi Longstocking, The Little Prince, Bambi, and Babar, the general public remains shockingly unaware of children's books originating in other languages. Children's librarians remain even more unfortunately unaware of these books. The following charts indicate that one of the leading selection sources for librarians, Wilson's The Children's Catalog, recommends only miniscule numbers of books in translation in its highly regarded 'recommended' list. Three percent is hardly a significant number of recommendations.

Table C : RECOMMENDED BOOKS IN TRANSLATION (Children's Catalog)

A. Picture Books

	Books	Translations	Percentage
1978 Supplement	94	2	1.88%
1979 Supplement	93	3	2.79%
1980	91	1	.91%

B. Fiction

1978 Supplement	80	4	3.2%
1979 Supplement	112	2	2.24%
1980	114	3	3.42%

WHY TRANSLATIONS FOR CHILDREN?

The years following the second World War marked a period of intense upheaval, international frustration, inward-focused reconstruction policies, and a general lack of literary communication. The establishment of the Iron Curtain effectively halted the releasing of reliable information about life in many of the Eastern European countries as well as consideration of other viewpoints regarding the strugglesduring the war years. An intense campaign was wagered to overcome these problems but although the curtains have parted slightly, this year does mark the 20th anniversary of the building of the

Berlin Wall. This wall stands as a symbol of disharmony, broken friendships, crumbling communication, and mistrust amongst nations. Too frequently a them-us situation is established when little information or knowledge is available about the other side. Chidren do not come to know differing points-of-view or customs strange to them.

The focus today attempts to teach about life in these Eastern European countries: to unfold the facts and mysteries about that other side. The best way for children to gain an insight into life in other areas, such as Eastern Europe, is to read books translated from original languages. These are not tainted with Western views and biases; but, reflect an honest expression of thought by a writer in tune with the country. As such they establish genuine bridges of understanding between peoples.

Reading books about young people in other countries gives children a reflection of life in other areas which may not prove to be so vastly different from their own. Children's lives would be considerably less rich if they could not rejoice along with the antics of Pippi Longstocking, wonder at the power of nature with Bambi, see with Heidi's eyes the splendor of the Alps, have an itchy nose with Pinocchio, laugh at the blunderings of the Robber Hotzenplotz, or the foibles of Mrs. Pepperpot.

At first, young readers will be attracted by the superficiality of strange sounding names, the cleverness of colloquial expressions, the intriguing place names, the mysteriously incomprehensible settings, or the rigid rules of conduct. Gradually as the story evolves the reader becomes one with the main characters and views the adventure as well as the setting through their eyes.

The giving and receiving of quality literature for children is one gift which all countries can do equally generously whether they be East or West, Third World, or Superpower. Children living in the more highly developed countries might gain an insight into the problems facing cultural minorities in both Canada and the United States.

PUBLISHERS AND TRANSLATING

It is often by pure luck that many English-speaking publishers become aware of potential books for translation. Picture books are relatively easier to translate than fiction since many European countreis have established a tradtion of cooperating in co-productions. These books are designed with ample white spaces and the translated storyline can be superimposed onto them. The decision as to which books are to be translated is frequently decided at the Bologna Children's Book Fair in April and the massive Frankfurt Book Fair in October. At these fairs the reproduction and translation rights are arranged and contracts signed.

Fiction books provide much more of a challenge for the interested publisher. Initially the publisher must receive a recommendation for translating the book, then seriously consider the commercial aspects: the translator, the cost, the audience appeal, and the translatability.

One of the reasons that publishers are reluctant to embark on producing books in translation is the complex nature of the translation process and the difficulty of finding a highly qualified person to translate the literature successfully. This person must have a knowledge and appreciation of literature for children; have an awareness of the interests of English-speaking children; and be able to make a trusted reader's recommendation about whether or not it is feasible to translate the book. Unless the editor reads the original language, the translator's judgement proves to be vital. The editor then, is dependent upon this judgement for the success of the publication.

Secondly, the qualities requisite for the person who does the actual translation of the book include: sympathetic, analytic readers (Polushkin) with as good command of the English Language as with the original language (Bell); writers rather than just language experts (Carus).

Translators are faced with the dilemma; do a literal word-for-word rendering of the story or else flow with the spirit of the story. There are dangers inherent in both positions for a lack of vitality and readability may culminate from being too literal; whereas, an adapted version may become easily removed from the author's original intent. These adaptations become particularly bothersome when they try to be simplified editions for younger children. In the purest form, then, translating literature for children presents a complex challenge when the translator tries to retain the original

sense and meaning of the story in another language. The uppermost task for the translator is to try to create the work as if the author were actually writing in the translator's own language.

THE TRANSLATING PROCESS

What is the process of translating? How is one work of art transformed into another? Edward Fenton clearly states:

> The first and foremost aspect of translation is, of course, that of meaning. The translator must know both languages well enough to know what is meant in the original language and then to dredge from the depths of his experience and judgment in the second language the most effective, most suitable, and most evocative equivalent word or phrase. In adddition to this, translation is not merely a matter of shifting linguistic gears. It is also a shift from one culture to another, from one way of thought into another, from one way of life into another. What may be strange and exotic must be made toseem, if not familiar, at least rational and acceptable.(638)

Paule Daveluy, a Canad an translator who is recognized and respected for her quality French translations of English Canadian children's books comments:

> I become automatically, the author. Translators have different techniques. Mine is simple: I translate mot-a-mot on a stenographer's pad -anywhere:in the car, under the dryer, on plane trips - then type the result and, last but not least, write back the text in neat clean French as if it were my own manuscript. And I enjoy every phase of the process. I discovered that I really liked 'playing with words,' translating, correcting, revising. I have to love the book I translate to make a success of the work involved.

This translation process which demands great intensity and determination as noted by Maria Polushkin's reaction.

> My own view is that, first of all, a translator must be a reader-aympathetic,analytic reader-and, secondly, that she out to be a writer herself. I am beginning to suspect that my old image of a translator as a person bent over a huge array of dictionaries and obscure volumes on syntactical usage is not really what translation is all about. For me, translation is more like a creative art than a science. I immerse myself in another writer's art, probing and analyzing every nuance; and, then, I set about trying to re-create that work in what amounts to a different medium--in this case, the French language. (257)

> Once I was past my initial interest and excitement, the process of translation was one of intense anxiety and disorientation. For long periods of time, I felt like a person suffering from aphasia in two languages at once. But, a commitment had been made; there were promises to keep;and sometimes only the prospect of having to face my editor kept me going. (257)

Anthea Bell concludes by constantly asking one basic question, "What would the author have said if he or she had been writing in English in the first place? This is how we try to offer English-speaking children works they might otherwise never encounter. We are chameleons, or mirrors; we reflect and interpret." (553)

THE VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDE

What is life like for children in another country whose language is not English? It is only through the means of literature in translation that English-speaking students will be able to comprehend and understand life styles other than their own. To walk in the characters' shoes, to view events through their eyes, and to listen with their ears allows the students to develop their feelings and sensitivities towards others.

Realistic views of foreign lives are frequently present with great sensitivity. Babbis Friis-Baastad's Don't Take Teddy portrays a young boy's relationship with his mentally retarded brother. Because of added responsibility,a love-annoyance conflict exists; yet when Teddy is in danger because of his rock throwing episode, Mikkel protectively secrets him away to the family's mountain cottage. Although illness forces their return, a deeper understanding of the value of life has been unfolded.

Mia, presents a picture of a developing Swedish teenager who survives her parent's marriage breakdown. While living with her father

she comes to value her grandmother and realize the importance of everyone's feeling needed. Another Swedish youth doesn't care that his mother's new boyfriend has had a prison record; And Leffe Was Instead of a Dad presents the sensitive support given by Magnus to his mother when Leffe's problems of not getting a job, increasing drinking and stealing surface again.

A sense of danger, intrigue and suspense follows Tibeso in The Leopard as he leaves his Ethiopian home in search of whoever is stealing his cattle.

Nicknamed Pulga , or the flea, a Bogata street urchin provides for a reader the stark realities of poverty in Latin America. A friendly truck driver takes him as a helper and together they face both mystery and intrigue. A complementary contemporary view of rural Colombia is also given by Siny Van Iterson in another of her books, The Curse of Laguna Grande. The influence of superstition on the actions of rural people confronts a young lad as he returns to his family lands.

Maria Gripe's The Night Daddy is one of the most popular books which gives youngsters a commonality of feeling with the main character. Julia, a fatherless Swedish girl, develops a direct, humorous yet warm friendship with an eccentric young man who has been hired as her nightsitter. The duo establish a shared-chapter approach to communicate their story and this is continued in a second volume entitled, Julia's House.

Reality and fantasy are mixed inextricably together in Hannelore Valencak's When Half-Gods Go. A young girl who has left her grumpy boyfriend while travelling in Greece meets an attractive young man who seems too good to be true. Does he really look like the statute of one of the Greek gods she had just seen in the museum?

Until recently the most popular war stories read by children were British and American publications. These reflected a certain degree of actual involvement but as could be anticipated this tended to be exclusively from the allies viewpoint. Too frequently the image inherited by North American children of such countries as Germany, Japan, and Russia is evolved from their reading glorified fictional accounts of the World wars. The smell of action, the sound of guns, and the sight of conflict in these volumes allow only a superficial view of humanity. Few such novels portray combatants as fellow humans.

It is really only in the last ten years that children have been able to read accounts of the war from either the German, the occupied, or the survivors' point of view. Undoubtedly the English translation of The Diary of Anne Frank in 1953 has had the most dramatic influence on giving an insight into survival during the war period. Anne's buoyant outlook on life has given not only a realistic awareness of being voluntarily captive but an inspiration to many on the meaning of life itself.

The seventies have witnessed an emergence of European writing about the war period. Hans Peter Richter has written three outstanding books which reveal life as it was during the Third Reich:two friends, Heinz and Gunther, witness the changing pressures in I Was There; the young Jew-boy in Friedrich experiences rather brutal treatment; and a young 17-year old officer survives three disallusioning army years in the hauntingly realistic account in The Time of the Young Soldiers.

The actualities of survival during the war, written from the experience of people who lived in occupied territories have recently received considerable attention. Dutch writers have been most prolific about this period. Winter in Wartime is highlighted by the actions of a 15-year old boy who saved the life of a British parachutest without the slightest awareness on the part of the Germans. The Winter When Time Was Frozen, winner of the 1980 Batchelder Award, depicts a young girl who grows to maturity as the war's presence is increasingly felt on their Dutch farm. One of the most dramatic characterizations during this war period is Jaap ter Haar's Boris, the 12-year old, who with his friend survived the siege of Leningrad. The ingenuity, determination, and survival techniques are also reflected in the plight of the young cigarettesellers in Warsaw (Ziemian), the daily life of boys in Athens at the time of the Nazi takeover (Zei), a Russian general's young daughter trying to escape capture (Ryss), as well as the young boy in I Am David (Holm) who escapes from a concentration camp.

Children of all countries love to laugh especially when the joke is on them and their lives. Pippi Longstocking, Astrid Lingren's mischievous red-haired Swedish imp is dear to the heart of all children. The newest version, Pippi on the Run features the movie-based photographs of By-Erik Gyber. The delightful Lindgren humor is caught again in Emil and His Clever Pig as she describes the incredible situations of boy and beast. While his parents had waited sixteen years for a son, Lenny in A Late-Born Child, has a good many rather sarcastic comments to make; afterall he wasn't exactly sitting twiddling his thumbs to get born! Another boy arrived in a can! Conrad was the perfect mail-order child who was delivered by mistake. Hilarious moments reveal his adopted mother's attempts to teach Conrad how to be bad so that he can stay and be her son and not be returned to the factory. The Robber Hotzenplotz (Preussler) deserves a place in children's hearts as his improbable triumphs over the law and the police are becoming legendary.

Traditionally, translations have presented historical events and legends which have attempted to characterize the essence of a people. Otfried Pressler's The Satanic Mill presents the attraction and force of evil over individuals but a force which can be overcome by the powers of good. A primitive tribe'sfear of innovation in An Old Tale Carved Out of Stone, forces the young boy Liok to become a priest,eventually to escape after violating tribal taboos. A lesser known event has been

splendidly brought to life by Suzanne Martel in her The King's Daughter which vividly and realistically portrays the young girl's arrival in New France.

The influence of superstition and story is dramatically evident in the Bolivian countryside setting of The Curse of Laguna Grande. A similar setting in Austria places young Annie in the situation of feeling that she has a special power over the rain. A cruel girlfriend makes her believe that she is responsible for a severe forest fire and the subsequent loss of life. Swedish medieval settings capture Maria Gripe's gothic tales of intrigue. Relationships between rich and poor are established when The Glassblower's Children are kidnapped by a wealthy lord, and when a common whipping boy serves as a friend to the lonely teenaged king.

TRANSLATIONS DON'T SELL WELL!

The simple facts are straight forward enough: books in translation for children do not have great sales. Why? One obvious reason is that the book-buying public just does not see the relevance of children's books with an international flavor, or does it realize the availability of such books. The U.S. projected national-image is influentially too great to overcome such an international outlook. Another factor is that translations are more costly and more bother to produce for the publishing firms. Besides dealing with an author and illustrator, editors must now contend with a translator, in fact, too frequently may be at the mercy of their judgement as to the

quality of the translation. Because the time-process interval is longer much frustration is added to the production and the cost. However, it must also be realized that books in translation rearely receive the same attention on a publisher's list particularly for promotional purposes. Frequently they are just listed without special regard for translator or country affiliation.

Teachers and librarians are well versed in the promotional successes of the Newbery and Caldecott Medals and to a much lesser extent in Canada of the Canada Council Medals or those presented by the Canadian Library Association. An aura of almost quasi-holiness has surrounded the Newbery-Caldecott books whether or not they appeal to children or are indeed readable by them.

Surprisingly, there is in the United States another most significant national publishing award given by the American Library Association:The Mildred L. Batchelder Award. This is the most recent yet least known of the major children's literature honors. It was named in honor of an ALA librarian who devoted many years to encouraging the promotion of translations of children's books. Each year since 1968 this award has been given to the American publisher for the most outstanding book originally published in a foreign language.

Sadly, few of the award-winning titles are well known in the school or public libraries. It is regrettable that children haven't been able to chuckle at the antics of the perfect-kid Conrad, shiver with suspense while

reading The Leopard, sympathize with Mikkel trying to protect a mentally retarded brother in Don't Take Teddy, view the war from a young German boy's eyes in Friedrich, or follow a Greek boy's war involvement in Petros' War.

During the first ten years of this award, it appeared that 42 books were nominated representing nine publishing houses as well a nine languages. Seventeen of the books (40.5%) were translated from the German, four from Dutch (9.5%), four from Swedish (9.5%), seven from Russian (16.7%) as well as Danish (2), Czech (2), Greek (2), and Japanese (1). (nist)

Why are these award-winning books not known? Primarily because of a simple lack of publicity and the lack of a visible sticker on the books. Even the American Library Association itself almost forgets that it gives this award as evidenced by the fact that at the annual Newbery/Caldecott award ceremony no mention is made of the Batchelder Award. Perhaps the award would have more significance if it were awarded to the author or translator rather than to a nebulous being such as a publishing company. The personal contacts and relationships not being present make the honor rather distant and vague.

The impression of translated books being 'heavy-reading' and more thought conscious than action-orientated may in some aspects have a basis since frequently the formats have print-packed pages and few illustrations. Alas, it is always this negative image that librarians remember.

Fortunately, the last ten years have witnessed an upsurge in the number of attractive and appealing translations for children. This is reflected by the scope of quality titles evidenced in the accompanying bibliography. Books for children in translation? They provide for us mirrors of cultures, bridges of understanding, and avenues of adventures. Chidren deserve to be introduced to this, their fourth world.

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